



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/608,208	06/30/2000	Robert L. Alcorn	700-218RP	9291
7590	10/06/2003			EXAMINER
Wayne M. Kennard Hale and Dorr LLP 60 State Street Boston, MA 02109				NGUYEN, THANH T
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2143	10

DATE MAILED: 10/06/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

24

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/608,208	ALCORN ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Tammy T Nguyen	2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE (3) MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 June 2000.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-46 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-46 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 30 June 2000 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>5</u> .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

Detailed Office Action

1. This action is in response to the application **09/608208** filed. **June 30, 2000**
2. Claims **1-46** have been examined.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

4. Claims 1-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Slider et al. (USPN 6,505,031 – Date of Patent: January 7, 2003, herein referred to as “Slider”).

5. As to claim 1, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, including a method of a system for providing to a community of users access to a plurality of online courses comprising:

a) a plurality of user computers, each user computer associated with a user of the system having predefined characteristics indicative of a predetermined role in the system, each role providing a level of access to a plurality of data files associated with a course and a level of control over data files associated with a course (Fig. 1, fig. 2, col.3, lines 15-20 and col.1, lines 44-60), and

b) a server computer in communication with each of the user computers over a network, the server computer comprising

means for storing a plurality of data files associated with a course (Fig. 1, col.1, lines 50-60);

means for assigning a level of access to each file, the level of access associated with the ability of a user to access the file (Fig. 2, col.10, line 60 to col.11, line 11, col.11, lines 50-59, and col.3, lines 62-67);

means for determining an access level of a user requesting access to a file (col.11, lines 50-59, and col.12, lines 5-18);

means for allowing access to a file associated with a course as a function of the access level of the user (col.12, lines 5-18, and col.12, lines 5-19).

6. As to claim 2, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the user roles comprise a student role associated with a student user, an instructor role associated with an instructor user, an administrator role associated with an administrator user (col.4, lines 10-21).

7. As to claim 3, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the instructor user

is provided with an access level to enable the creation and editing of a plurality of files associated with a course (col.12, lines 35-42, col.14, lines 15-20, and col.13, lines 40-45).

8. As to claim 4, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise an announcement file (col.5, lines 45-65, col.13, lines 50-62).

9. As to claim 5, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise a course information file (col.5, lines 20-35).

10. As to claim 6, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise a staff information file (col.5, lines 20-35).

11. As to claim 7, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise a course documents file (col.15, lines 40-50).

12. As to claim 8, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise an assignments file (col.5, lines 20-35).

13. As to claim 9, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise a dropbox file (col.10, lines 50-65).

14. As to claim 10, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise an asynchronous communication file (col.5, lines 45-65, col.13, lines 50-62).

15. As to claim 11, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the course files comprise a synchronous communication file (col.5, lines 45-65, col.13, lines 50-62).

16. As to claim 12, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the student user is provided with an access level to enable reading of a plurality of files associated with a course (Fig.2, access level).

17. As to claim 13, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the student user

is provided with an access level to enable modification of a subset of the plurality of files associated with a course (col.15, lines 40-49)

18. As to claim 14, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the student user is provided with an access level to enable creation of a student file associated with a file for which the student user is able to read (Fig.2, access level).

19. As to claim 15, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein which the file that the student is able to read is an assessment file created by the instructor user, and the student file created by the student user is a response to the assessment file (col.4, lines 50-65).

20. As to claim 16, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the assessment file is comprises a plurality of examination questions selected by the instructor user to assess the ability of the student user (col.13 lines 48-60, col.3, line 62 to col.4, line 5).

21. As to claim 17, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the examination questions are selected by the instructor user from a predetermined pool of available examination questions (col.14, lines 29-55).

22. As to claim 18, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the examination questions are created by the instructor user substantially at the time of the creation of the assessment file (col.4, lines 50-65).

23. As to claim 19, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the student file is reviewed by the instructor user and assigned a grade (col.5, lines 20-35, col.14, lines 40-55).

24. As to claim 20, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the grade is made available to the student user (col.5, lines 20-35, and col.7, lines 50-63).

25. As to claim 21, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the instructor

user collates a plurality of grades obtains form reviewing a plurality of student files, and wherein the collated grades are made available to all student users associated with the course (col.13, lines 45-55).

26. As to claim 22, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, in which the file that the student is able to read is an assignment file created by the instructor user, and the student file created by the student user is a response to the assignment file (col.4, lines 40-53).

27. As to claim 23, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the dropbox file comprises a plurality of files transferred to the server computer from one or more student users associated with the course (Fig.1, col.1, lines 50-65).

28. As to claim 24, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the instructor user is provided with access to the files in the dropbox file, whereby the instructor user may download, edit and upload the files in the dropbox (col.13, lines 15-42, and col.14, lines 10-20).

29. As to claim 25, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein a user is required to enter a login sequence into a user computer in order to be provided with access to course files associated with that user (col.1, lines 50-65, and col.3, line 62 to col.4, line 5).

30. As to claim 26, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the user is provided with access to all courses with which the user is associated after entry of the logon sequence (col.3, line 62 to col.4, line 5).

31. As to claim 27, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the user is provided with a web page comprising a plurality of course hyperlinks, each of said course hyperlinks associated with each course that the user has enrolled in (col.15, lines 20-49).

32. As to claim 28, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of a

course hyperlink will provide the user with a web page associated with the selected course, the web page comprising a plurality of content hyperlinks to various content areas associated with the course (col.3, lines 31-47, col.4, lines 45-53).

33. As to claim 29, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein said content hyperlinks comprise an announcement area hyperlink, a course information hyperlink, a staff information hyperlink, a course documents hyperlink, an assignments hyperlink, a communications hyperlink, and a student tools hyperlink (col.10, lines 40-56, and col.14, lines 8-25).

34. As to claim 30, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the announcement area hyperlink provides a web page comprising a group of course announcements (col.col.6, line 63 to col.7, line 8, and col.9, lines 10-23).

35. As to claim 31, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the course information hyperlink provides a web page comprising information regarding the associated course (col.15, lines 20-49).

36. As to claim 32, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the staff information hyperlink provides a web page comprising data regarding the instructors of the associated course (col.3, lines 33-47, and col.4, lines 40-53).

37. As to claim 33, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the course documents hyperlink provides a web page comprising a listing of documents associated with the course (col.11, lines 50-65, and col.15, lines 22-49).

38. As to claim 34, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein the listing of course documents comprise active hyperlinks to the documents (col.10, lines 45-56).

39. As to claim 35, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the assignments hyperlink provides a web page comprising a group of course assignments (col.9, lines 10-23, and col.9 lines 25-50).

40. As to claim 36, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein selection of the communications hyperlink provides a web page comprising hyperlinks to a group of communication tools comprising an asynchronous communication tool and a synchronous communication tool (col.12, lines 5-18).

41. As to claim 37, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, including a system for providing to a community of users access to a plurality of online courses (col.3, line 62 to col.4, line 5), comprising a server computer in communication with each of a plurality of user computers over a network (Fig.1, users over network), the server computer comprising means for creating a plurality of course user accounts from a file of existing user accounts associated with an external computer (Fig.1, col.4, lines 55-65, and col.13, lines 10-20).

42. As to claim 38, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, including a method for providing online education comprising;

- a. establishing a course to be offered online, comprising the steps of:
 - i. an instructor user generating a set of course files for use with teaching the course (col. 4, lines 45-65, and col.4, line 65 to col.5, line 2);
 - ii. Transferring the course files to a server computer for storage thereat (col.5, lines 3-19); and
 - iii. Making access to the course files available to a predefined community of student users having access to the server computer over a network (col.12, lines 5-19);

b. offering the course to be taken online to a group of student users (col.9, lines 24-65); and
c. providing access over the network to the course files to a student user who has enrolled in the course (col.11, lines 50-60).

43. As to claim 39, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, wherein at least one of the course files comprises a course assignment, further comprising the steps of:

d) the student user creating a student file in response to the course assignment (col.12, lines 50-65); and

e) the student user transferring the student file to the server computer (col.15, lines 30-50).

44. As to claim 40, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the steps of

f) the instructor user accessing the student file from the server computer (col.3, line 62 to col.4, line 5);

g) the instructor user reviewing the student file to determine compliance with the course assignment (col.13, lines 40-50); and

h) the instructor user assigning a grade to the student file as a function of the determination of compliance with the course assignment (col.4, lines 45-55).

45. As to claim 41, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the step of the instructor user posting the grade to a file on the server computer accessible only to the student user with which the grade is associated (col.7, lines 50-63, col.5, lines 20-35, and col.14, lines 35-55).

46. As to claim 42, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the

steps of the instructor repeating the steps (f), (g) and (h) for a plurality of student users that are enrolled in the course (col.15, lines 22-49 and col.10, lines 45-56).

47. As to claim 43, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the step of the instructor user performing a statistical analysis on the grades assigned to the plurality of student users (col.7, lines 50-63, col.5, lines 20-35, and col.14, lines 35-55).

48. As to claim 44, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the step of making results of the statistical analysis available to the student users enrolled in the course (col.15, lines 22-49 and col.10, lines 45-56).

49. As to claim 45, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the step of providing an asynchronous communication tool accessible to student users enrolled in the course for enabling asynchronous communication amongst the student users (Fig.1, col.1, lines 65).

50. As to claim 46, Slider teaches the invention as claimed, further comprising the step of providing a synchronous communication tool accessible to student users enrolled in the course for enabling synchronous communication amongst the student users (Fig.1, col.1, lines 65).

Conclusion

51. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure.

52. Any inquiries concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Tammy T. Nguyen** who may be reached via telephone at

(703) 305-7982. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. eastern standard time.

If you need to send the Examiner, a facsimile transmission regarding After Final issues, please send it to **(703) 746-7238**. If you need to send an Official facsimile transmission, please send it to **(703) 746-7239**. If you would like to send a Non-Official (draft) facsimile transmission the fax is **(703) 746-7240**. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's Supervisor, **David Wiley**, may be reached at **(703) 308-5221**.

TTN

September 25, 2003



DAVID WILEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100